

NSC BRIEFING

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CONFIDENTIAL

16 MAY 1956

FRANCE NORTH AFRICA

- I. After good start on concessions to nations at either end its African enclave, France now dangerously dragging feet over Moroccan, Tunisian diplomatic exchanges.
 - A. Both nations pressing West (US especially) for recognition.
 - B. French intransigence may give Arab States or Bloc chance be "first friends" of new states.
 - C. Equally bad is resulting internal ill-will towards France, and disorder at both ends of enclave, at time when Algerian rebellion (in center) worsening.
- II. In Morocco, French now claim "rebel" Army of Liberation may turn Sultan into "captive" unless he seeks French aid. Also claim Army of Liberation aiding Algerian rebels.
 - A. Army of Liberation (6 to 15 thousand) formed late '55, pressured French for Sultan's return. Since March '56, has observed cease-fire at Sultan's request: thus hardly a "rebel" force.
 - B. However, contains some Algerians and certainly helping rebels western Algeria, just as Tunisian rebels are aiding rebels eastern Algeria.
- III. French Defense Ministry feels 600 to 700 thousand troops needed for Algerian pacification (in contrast 380 thousand now said "in place" there).

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- A. This seems overdrawn, but no doubt rebel activity quickening. Starting 6 May, separate bands (reported totaling 1,000 or more men each) began series evidently coordinated raids.
 - 1. Targets: isolated farms, small outposts, native villages; both Oran-Tlemcen area of west and Constantine area in east.
 - 2. By 11 May, 500 rebel casualties reported by press; no French casualties made public.
- B. Rebels (still estimated at 15,000 by French, despite reported heavy losses) appear better armed than before.
- IV. Although some contacts between French and rebels reported, prospects for negotiated settlement in Algeria dim at present.
 - A. "Federation" solution suggested in some French circles.
 - B. Even talk of partition, but this obviously impractical.
- V. Double dilemma for French.
 - A. Concessions to Morocco, Tunisia merely heighten Algerian demands: thus French squeezed at each end and in real trouble in middle.
 - B. Yet failure to preserve significant French position in North Africa would mean serious repercussions in Metropolitan France.

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